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GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

THE SLAVE TRADE IN CENTRAL AFRICA.—While the transportation of slaves from the coast to Zanzibar has been almost entirely stopped by the exertions of the British navy, slaves in large numbers are still brought to the coast mostly from the tribes living to the east of Lake Nyassa. Huge caravans are reported passing north along the coast, and probably these slaves are embarked from points far to the north in the Somali country. Others are smuggled into dhows by twos and threes at the coast towns, and so escape detection. The presence of Europeans even singly and unarmed in the interior has done much to discourage the kidnapping of the natives. A missionary in East Africa, writing to the *London Times*, quotes a chief as saying: "We don't want to sell slaves if we can get our wants supplied by other means. You have come here with cloth, and beads, and brass wire, things which we formerly bought with slaves, but now we can sell our grain, our rice, our beans, our eggs, our fowls for them, and we are well satisfied. As to gunpowder, you won't bring that and sell it to us, but we are safe now that you live here, people won't come to sell us into slavery; we are, like you, living in peace, and so we no longer want gunpowder."

The trade is also being stealthily carried on in the Red sea. An interesting letter to the *Times*, from Alexandria, gives an account of Col. Gordon's successful efforts to destroy this traffic in the Soudan. His rule extends from the first cataract of the Nile to the equatorial lakes, from the western frontier of Darfur to Cape Gardafui and the towns of Berbera and Zayla on the Indian ocean.

Having succeeded in the first two years of his government in establishing order throughout his dominions, he next turned his attention to breaking up the trade in slaves, prevailing chiefly between tenth and fifth degrees of north latitude, and especially in the region described by Schweinfurth as forming the water-shed of the Bahr Gazel—a vast alluvial land formerly rich in population, corn and cattle, but now turned into "barren wildernesses." In 1871 Dr. Schweinfurth estimated that 2000 traders were annually obtaining 15,000 slaves from one set of tribes alone. In the last half of 1878, Col. Gordon arrested forty-two caravans and liberated the slaves. Finally he despatched Capt. Gessi with 3000 men against Suleyman, the principal slave dealer, who had broken out into open rebellion.

In an attack made by Suleyman, with 11,000 men, on Capt. Gessi's entrenched position on the 27th of December last, the rebels were totally defeated, leaving 1087 dead on the field, and on the following day 5000 deserters came over to Gessi's camp. "The enemy retired but Gessi followed them up and killed ten chiefs and over 2000 of his men, and is still in pursuit." The

¹ Edited by ELLIS H. YARNALL, Philadelphia.

capture of all the positions which at present serve as so many slave trade centers is considered now certain. The root of all the nefarious traffic will thus be destroyed, and the destruction of these merchants means the end of the trade.

Owing to the many natural impediments, Col. Gordon is convinced that the commercial highway of Europe to the rich equatorial districts of Africa does not lie along the Nile but by way of the Indian ocean.

MICROSCOPY.¹

PURITY OF LAKE WATER.—In a Report on Microscopical Examinations of the water from Lake Michigan, as delivered from the city hydrants in Chicago, by Mr. B. W. Thomas, in the Third Annual Report of the Board of Public Works of that city, it is argued that the water for supplying the hydrants is taken from too near the shore, although pumped from cribs which are two miles out in the lake. After describing the method of obtaining organisms by filtering the water through a piece of cotton cloth tied in the form of a bag over the end of a faucet, and enumerating the harmless vegetable and animal forms that constitute nearly all of the filtrate obtained, the paper concludes as follows:

"But occasionally we find what is not quite so acceptable, for instance a *Tardigrada* (*Macrobiotus lufelandi*), a *Paramecium*, an *Anguillula fluviatilis*, a *Hydrachna*, a family of lively *Vorticellæ*, etc., that have evidently been carried out to the lake crib by the lake or river currents from the breakwater or shore, where, at certain seasons, they are found in great numbers, especially near the river or sewer outlets. Storms scatter these organisms in the waters of the lake for some considerable distance from the shore, and when once taken into the tunnels and mains they continue to multiply, and a few of them can be found in the water supply at almost all seasons of the year.

"Careful observation by different microscopists does not leave a reasonable doubt that nearly all of the impurities, properly so called, found in the water as drawn from the hydrants comes directly or indirectly from the sewage and river water that is discharged into the lake. So long ago as December, 1871, Prof. H. H. Babcock, in an article in *The Lens*, "on the effect of the reversal of the current of the Chicago river on the hydrant water," said that the microscopic examinations by himself and others interested in the same study "are sufficient to determine the fact that the reversal of the course of the Chicago river has decidedly increased the purity of the hydrant water by removing a large part of the organisms it had previously contained, and I have no doubt that the sanitary condition of the city—so marked at the time—was promoted by this change in the character of the water supply.

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